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REFORMER

matters as phaetons and tandems, the decorations of Ma-bille, the aspect of the rooms on the top-floor of the Grand Hotel; the view from, them, and the facial mask of a woman dying (as Nana died) from small-pox.<sup>1</sup>

As the publication proceeded in " Le Voltaire " the complaints became more numerous. A good many people professed to be shocked; Gambetta presently complained to the editor that the story was " too strong "; and the editor requested Zola's permission to curtail or omit certain passages. This was accorded, the latter half of the work appearing in " Le Voltaire " in a bowdlerized form. On January 2, 1880, Zola started on the fourteenth and last chapter, and on January 7 he completed it. "Let me tell you a great piece of news," he wrote to a friend that day, " I finished ' Nana ' this morning. . . . What relief! Never did any previous work of mine upset me as this has done. At present let it be worth what it may, it has ceased to exist for me. . . . I write to you in the joy of deliverance. My last chapter seems to me to be the most weird and successful thing I have ever written."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mr. E. H. Sherardin's "Simile Zola: a Biographical and Critical Study," London, 1903, prints several of Zola's letters on the above subjects. The following may be given as a specimen: "MMan, September 18, 1879 : I have received your book on small-pox. That will evidently suffice for my purpose."

I will devise a death mask by comparing the various documents. I am very much tempted to make the disease black pox which, in point of horror, is the strangest. Only I admit that if without taking too much trouble you could manage to see the corpse of a person who had died of that complaint — I say, that is a nice little task ! — you would oblige me greatly. . . . In that case mind you supply full details about the state of the eyes, nose and mouth, giving me a precise geographical chart, from which, of course, I should only take what I may need." This suggestion was not acted upon. In describing Nana's death Zola eventually had to rely on the statements he found in medical works.

<sup>2</sup> Sherard, *Z. c.*, p. 171.